Concessional loans to small scale industries

†1547. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to provide concessional loans on the lines of agriculture to those small scale industries which are distressed due to expensive loans and negligence of the banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, the final decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) The then Union Finance Minister, while presenting the interim Budget 2004-05 had made an announcement on Feb. 3, 2004 regarding creation of a Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Fund for making available credit to SMEs. Accordingly a SME Fund has been structured by SIDBI to make available timely and adequate financial resources to SME sector at competitive rate of interest *i.e.* 2 per cent below PLR of SIDBI under direct assistance.

The fund envisages a corpus of Rs. 10,000 crore spread over FY 2005 and FY 2006. Under the fund, 80 per cent of the resources are proposed to be reserved for SSI units.

Production of cardamom

1548. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the area of cultivation and quantum of production of cardamom in the country;

(b) the year-wise production of cardamom and its value during the last three years; and

(c) the details of the exports and imports of cardamom during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The area under cultivation of cardamom (Small) was 73,237 hectares and its production was 11,580

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.